



# Focus Schools: Parental Notification Process

Presented by:  
Michigan Department of Education

# Presentation Overview

- Update schools on 2014-15 requirements for Parent Notification of Focus School status and considerations
- Address details that need to be included in communications with parents
- Provide information about samples / templates that districts can use to communicate aspects of Focus School status

# Update on ESEA Flex

- Districts with Title I Focus Schools (identified in the 2014 cohort) are required to send a letter to parents of students in the Focus School
- In past years, the letter was combined with information regarding the Choice / Transfer option, but that has been lifted after amendments to Michigan's ESEA Flexibility Waiver
- For more information about Choice / Transfer and transportation, see the accompanying presentation and FAQ document

# Focus Schools: Letter of Identification & Notification

Who gets a letter, and what is the purpose?

- Parents of students enrolled in the Title I Focus School from 2013-14 who are eligible to return
- Parents of students that are expected to enter this Focus School in the 2014-15 school year (i.e. entering kindergarten, entering middle school from an elementary, School of Choice students, etc.)
- The letter must identify the school as a Focus School, the reason for this identification, and the school and district plans to improve achievement

# Focus Schools: Timeline for Letters of Notification

- Letters must be sent to that parents receive them no later than 10 days following public release of the Top-to-Bottom list, or August 26, 2014, whichever date is later.
- Letters must be provided to parents of students that enroll AFTER the normal start of the school year
- If the Focus School is receiving Title I funds, the district will need to submit the letter as evidence of compliance later this year through the Michigan Electronic Grants System Plus (MEGS+)

# Focus Schools: Choice & Transfer Considerations

Choice and Transfer and transportation are no longer required of Focus Schools. However, if a district elects to provide or pay for transportation costs to allow students in an identified Focus School from past years to continue to attend...

- Details of the choice and transfer and/or transportation options made available must be included in letters to parents
- This does not need to be in the Focus School Identification Letter - it can be a separate letter
- Title I Building and District set-asides may not be used to pay for Choice/Transportation.

# Focus Schools: Letter Content and Considerations

The notification letter should **first** address the reason the school was identified as a Focus School

- Focus schools have the largest gaps between students with highest and lowest achievement
- Michigan identifies the 10% of schools in the state with the largest internal gaps in achievement
- Focus Schools are part of a statewide effort to close achievement gaps and support achievement of all students; this designation brings supports and requirements to help close these gaps
- If addressing data, identify school specific gaps without getting bogged down in metrics

# Focus Schools: Letter Content and Considerations

Much of the letter should focus on what the school and district will do to close these gaps and improve student achievement. Examples may come from:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document on Focus schools,
- Sample letters to parents regarding Focus school considerations and requirements, and
- Presentations on the required letter to parents for Title I Focus Schools, Focus school supports, and other related information.



# Focus Schools: Supporting Student Achievement

Incorporate requirements of Title I Focus Schools that support student achievement, such as:

- Implementation of a multi-tiered system of support that includes scaffolded instruction for students with disabilities and English Language Learners
- Implementation of the Superintendent's Dropout Challenge to assist students at risk of dropping out of school at some point in the future
- Administration of the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum to find potential gaps or strategies that can help students meet Career and College Ready standards

# Focus Schools: Supporting Student Achievement

Incorporate information about supports for Title I Focus Schools that address achievement, such as:

- Formation of a School Support Team with the ISD to develop and implement new strategies for instruction and improve teaching
- Collaboration with the District Improvement Facilitator assigned to the district by MDE to analyze data to better understand the school's strengths and challenges
- District monitoring and evaluation of the School Improvement Plan

# Focus Schools: Supporting Student Achievement

Incorporate initiatives of Title I Focus Schools that support student achievement, such as:

- Professional learning for educators on research based interventions to support achievement
- Teacher collaboration time to provide daily or weekly opportunities to develop and implement strategies to support individual students
- Engage in a School Improvement Review or other peer analysis practice that provides external perspectives on processes to support achievement

# Focus Schools: More Information on Parent Notification

- For more information, contact:

Jill Thompson - Focus School information

MDE Office of Education Improvement and  
Innovation (OEII)

517-373-4226

ThompsonJ17@michigan.gov